

ARTICLE INFORMATION PROVIDING SYSTEM AND ARTICLE
INFORMATION PROVIDING SERVER

[0001]

5 FIELD OF THE INVENTION

This invention relates to an article information providing system for providing the article information over a network, such as the Internet network, and to an article information-providing server capable of executing the article information providing system.

10 [0002]

BACKGROUND OF THE INVENTION

Up to now, advertisements for articles, such as goods, merchandise, and/or commodities, market searches or analyses employing questionnaire systems for users, or management of the 15 article information on the articles purchased by the customers, are carried out over the Internet, for promoting purchases of articles (see for example the Cited References, e.g., Patent Documents 1 to 5).

For example, in the Cited Reference 1, articles in keeping with preferences or likings of the user are selected, based on the 20 user's transaction record, and the article information is provided as "illustrative coordination" or samples or illustrations of articles that coordinate, match with and are suited to the user. By so doing, the user is able to obtain the information on the articles suited to his/her preferences. The Cited Reference 1 teaches a system in which 25 commodities or articles assumed to correspond to a user's preferences

are selected based on the user's transactions, such as shopping records. The user then receives suggestions of articles that coordinate with the user's likings.

[0003]

5 Patent Documents 1

JP Patent Kokai Publication JP-P2001-22831A

Patent Documents 2

JP Patent Kokai Publication JP-P2002-183598A

Patent Documents 3

10 JP Patent Kokai Publication JP-P2002-99840A

Patent Documents 4

JP Patent Kokai Publication JP-P2002-230411A

Patent Documents 5

JP Patent Kokai Publication JP-P2002-7679A

15 [0004]

SUMMARY OF THE DISCLOSURE

However, the conventional method for supplying the article information suffers from a problem that, since real-time market searches for articles or information analyses are infeasible, the 20 results of the analyses cannot easily be instantaneously reflected (changed or modified) on the advertisements and hence an effective advertisement cannot be provided in real-time.

Moreover, it takes a lot of time to design a questionnaire for each article and to collect the resulting data, and hence, it takes a lot 25 of time to perform the market searches.

[0005]

The above-described conventional method also suffers from a problem that, since it takes a lot of time to analyze the results of a questionnaire, and moreover the results of analyses, such as those of the geographical distribution of articles, cannot be output 5 instantaneously, the results of the analyses of market searches for goods are not up-to-date.

Consequently, when illustrative coordination, that is, articles that match to preferences of a user, is to be provided, as in the Patent 10 Documents 1, it is not possible to produce follow up that includes changes in the user's preferences over time.

[0006]

In view of the above depicted problems of the related art, it is an object of the present invention to provide an example of 15 combinations of goods, on a real-time basis, in an article information providing system and in an article information providing server.

It is another object of the present invention to provide an example of combinations of articles, suited to a user, on a real-time basis.

20 It is yet another object of the present invention to enable market analyses on a real-time basis.

[0007]

The present invention provides an article information providing system comprising portable terminal means for transmitting 25 a profile of a user and information of articles of goods (termed

"goods" herein) owned by the user, that is, "user-owned-goods-data", over a network, coordination means for providing an example of a combination of the goods owned by the user, that is, "user owned goods", using said user's profile and user-owned-goods-data, 5 received from said portable terminal means over said network, and combination information transmitting means for transmitting to said portable terminal means the example of the combination of the user owned goods provided by said coordination means. The portable terminal means transmits the user's profile and 10 user-owned-goods-data over the network. The coordination means provides an example and/or examples of the combination(s) of goods using said user's profile and information of goods or data transmitted from the portable terminal means over the network. The combination information transmitting means transmits the examples of the 15 combinations of goods provided by the coordination means to the portable terminal means.

[0008]

The coordination means may include storage means for storing user-owned-goods-data as information representing the user owned 20 goods and a condition and/or conditions of the combination(s) of the user owned goods. The coordination means can provide an example of the combination of the user owned goods based on the condition of the combination of the user owned goods using said user's profile and user-owned-goods-data received from said portable terminal means 25 and the user-owned-goods-data stored in the storage means.

The goods owned by the user, or “user owned goods”, may specifically include goods or articles currently being used by a user, that is, goods currently being worn (e.g., clothing) or being carried (e.g., devices such as headphones, mobile phones, etc.) by a user; for 5 simplicity, these goods are hereinafter called “in-hand user goods”.

[0009]

The portable terminal means may include position information acquisition means for acquiring the position information of said portable terminal means, said portable terminal means transmitting 10 the position information acquired by said position information acquisition means along with said user's profile and user-owned-goods-data. The coordination means then receives the position information over said network to provide the example of the combination of the user owned goods using said user's profile, the 15 user-owned-goods-data and the position information received over said network.

The article information providing system may further include information requesting means for requesting user-owned-goods-data and the position information of the portable terminal means.

20 Upon receipt of the request for the user-owned-goods-data and position information from said information requesting means over said network, the portable terminal means transmits the user-owned-goods-data over said network.

[0010]

25 The combination information transmitting means may be

responsive to the request received over said network to transmit the example of the combination of the user owned goods provided by said coordination means over said network to make advertisement.

The article information providing system may further include
5 an advertiser terminal owned by an advertiser and market analysis
means for acquiring said user's profile and the
user-owned-goods-data from said portable terminal means, executing
market analyses of the articles of said user-owned-goods-data and
transmitting the results of the market analyses over said network to
10 said advertiser terminal.

[0011]

The portable terminal means may transmit only a difference of
information of user owned goods or a difference of the position
information over said network.

15 The portable terminal means may include goods information
readout means for reading out information of the user owned goods
from a carrier of the information of the user owned goods mounted on
goods and wherein the information read out by said goods
information readout means is transmitted over said network.

20 [0012]

The present invention also provides an article information
providing server comprising coordinating means including storage
means for storing user-owned-goods-data as information representing
the user owned goods and a condition of a combination of the user
25 owned goods, said coordinating means providing an example of the

combination of the user owned goods received over said network and the user-owned-goods-data stored in said storage means, based on said condition of the combination of the user owned goods, using said user's profile and the user-owned-goods-data, received over said 5 network, and combination information transmitting means for transmitting the example of the combination of the user owned goods provided by said coordination means over said network.

[0013]

The coordination means provides an example and/or examples 10 of combination(s) of the user owned goods using said user's profile and user-owned-goods-data transmitted from the portable terminal means over the network. The combination information transmitting means transmits the examples of the combination of the user owned goods provided by the coordination means to the portable terminal 15 means, over the network.

[0014]

The goods owned by the user, or user owned goods, may be the in-hand user goods as described above.

The coordination means may further receive the position 20 information over said network to provide the example of the combination of the user owned goods using said user's profile, user-owned-goods-data, and the position information received over said network.

[0015]

25 The combination information transmitting means may be

responsive to a request received over said network to transmit the example of the combination of the user owned goods provided by said coordination means over said network to make advertisements.

The article information providing system may further include
5 an advertiser terminal owned by an advertiser and market analysis means for acquiring said user's profile and the user-owned-goods-data from said portable terminal means, executing market analyses of the articles and transmitting the results of the market analyses over said network to said advertiser terminal.

10 The article information providing server may further include market analysis means for acquiring said user's profile and the user-owned-goods-data, for executing market analyses of the articles and transmitting the results of the market analyses over the network to an advertiser terminal owned by an advertiser.

15 The pronouns "he", "his", and "himself" include both masculine and feminine, that is, "he" is he and/or she, "his" is his and/or hers, and "himself" is himself and/or herself.

BRIEF DESCRIPTION OF THE DRAWINGS

Fig.1 is a block diagram of an article information providing
20 system according to a first embodiment of the present invention.

Fig.2 illustrates the operation of the first embodiment of the present invention.

Fig.3 illustrates the operation of the first embodiment of the present invention.

25 Fig.4 is a flow diagram for illustrating the operation of the

first embodiment of the present invention.

Fig.5 is a flow diagram for illustrating the operation of the first embodiment of the present invention.

Fig.6 illustrates the operation of the first embodiment of the
5 present invention.

Fig.7 is a flow diagram for illustrating the operation of the first embodiment of the present invention.

Fig.8 is a flow diagram for illustrating the operation of the first embodiment of the present invention.

10 Fig.9 is a flow diagram for illustrating the operation of the first embodiment of the present invention.

Fig.10 illustrates the operation of the first embodiment of the present invention.

15 Fig.11 is a flow diagram for illustrating the operation of the first embodiment of the present invention.

Fig.12 illustrates the operation of the first embodiment of the present invention.

Fig.13 illustrates the operation of a second embodiment of the present invention.

20 Fig.13 illustrates the operation of a third embodiment of the present invention.

Fig.14 is a flow diagram for illustrating the operation of the third embodiment of the present invention.

25 Fig.15 is a flow diagram for illustrating the operation of a fourth embodiment of the present invention.

[0016]

PREFERRED EMBODIMENTS OF THE INVENTION

The schematics of embodiments of the present invention will be explained as follows. The present embodiments of the present invention provide an article information providing system and an article information providing server using an accessing method over the Internet employing the portable communication equipment, such as a mobile phone, PHS (Personal Handyphone System), a portable information terminal having communication function (PDA) or 10 wireless LAN (mobile Internet access).

The present embodiments also provide an article information supplying method which provides the article information using the mobile Internet accessing method.

The present embodiments also provide an advertisement 15 business method for advertising goods using the mobile Internet access method and a method for acquiring the article information using the mobile Internet access method.

[0017]

In the present embodiment, as shown in Fig.1, a user registers 20 the information about the goods he/she wears and/or carries, such as apparel, accessories, headphone stereo units or mobile phones, (in-hand user goods) as well as information about the goods that he/she owns, in a service providing server (article information providing server) 4. The registration is performed over the Internet 25 (network) 2, using a mobile Internet accessing function of a user

terminal 1 (portable terminal means); the accessing function via the Internet can be owned by the portable communication equipment. The service provider analyzes the information as to position distribution based on position information or location, sex, age group or 5 combination (coordination) to supply the information over the Internet (network) 2 to an advertiser (specifically an advertiser server 3). When providing the information, the service provider may collect a fee from an advertiser. The advertiser can exploit the information when developing his new or improved articles and/or 10 sales strategies.

[0018]

The user may receive consideration, such as a point or fee, for providing the information. If the consideration is the points, these points may be saved to request exchange for articles or cash. The 15 user is also able to receive the position distribution of the apparel or the accessories, as analyzed by the service provider, through mobile Internet accessing. The user can be in fashion and follow the “real-time vogue” by using the received information as an information source when selecting his/her own clothing. 20 Accordingly, with the received information, the user can achieve coordination among clothing items (coordination) or accessories, such as the goods he/she carries, e.g., mobile phone, headphones, etc.

[0019]

For example, if the user accesses a service provider server 4, 25 over a network 22, via a user terminal 1, to retrieve an 'accessory'

worn preferably by a 'male' 'teenager' in the neighborhood of a 'movie theater' of 'Shibuya', the service provider server 4 provides the relevant information.

In retrieval, the user can retrieve, in a similar manner, the 5 information of an article which the advertiser asked the service provider to register at the outset, that is, which was registered in the service provider server 4. By this service, the user is able to follow the fashion trends as a target recipient of information, and to acquire the information of the goods in which he/she is interested. The 10 service provider is able to collect the fee for providing the "fashion trends" information services when the user is using the retrieval services.

[0020]

An advertiser may request the service provider to advertise, 15 while the information on the new goods and/or products, for which the request to advertise has been made, is introduced by the service provider to the user as an example of a combination of goods and/or products, in order to achieve an outstanding advertisement effect. For example, extremely effective advertising may present, as an image, 20 an example of a combination of the new goods and/or products with the apparel owned by the user and previously registered with the service provider server 4. On the other hand, the user is able to scrutinize new goods and/or products as coordinates while he/she considers the coordinates in light of apparel he/she owns. When 25 registering new goods and/or products in the service provider server

4, the service provider may collect the fee from the advertiser.

[0021]

In Fig.1, the user terminal 1 is a portable terminal means having position information acquisition means for acquiring the 5 position information of a terminal, such as a mobile phone, PHS or PDA. The user of the present service registers with the service provider server 4 on the user terminal 1 over the network 2. When registering, the user registers information representing the user (profile), such as sex, age and interests, e.g. "fond of cinema". The 10 service provider server 4 may exploit the information in analyzing the registered information. For example, the service provider server 4 may provide data, such as fashion of, or goods carried by, 'women' in their 'twenties' fond of 'cinema', to the advertiser.

[0022]

15 The user registers the user terminal information of his user terminal 1 in storage means for a database, provided in the service provider server 4, over the network 2. For example, in the instant embodiment, the network 2 is the Internet. There must be at least one user terminal 1 and at least one advertiser terminal 3 but these 20 terminals 1, 3 are not limited to those shown in Fig.1. The user terminal information includes the user's name, E-mail address, current position, sex, age and/or interests. The name may have a pseudonym or identification number for user identification. The user's profile or the position information of the user terminal 1 is 25 included in the user terminal information. The user terminal 1 may be

exemplified by a portable telephone terminal or a PHS terminal having the function of acquiring the current position information, using the portable telephone network or a GPS function. These terminals register the user's position information with the service provider server 4 from time to time or periodically.

5 [0023]

The user registers the information about the goods, such as apparel he/she wears and/or carries. Fig. 2 shows, as examples of the portable terminal 1 as user terminal, a portable terminal 21 for 10 entering information of the goods by a keyboard, as goods information inputting means, portable terminals 22, 23, having cameras as goods information readout means and adapted for entering information of the goods from these cameras, and a portable terminal 24 having a bar code reader 25 as goods information readout means 15 and adapted for entering information of the goods using the bar code.

[0024]

The registration is made on the service provider server 4 over the network 2, by entering information about the goods via a keyboard of the portable terminal 21, or by reading in the 20 identification number or the identification code, such as a bar code, provided on a tag (carrier of information of goods) attached to goods 26 to 29 from the outset, and/or by a camera or a bar code reader enclosed in the terminal.

When registering, a consideration or reward may be paid to 25 the user in the form of cash or points or the like. The bar code as the

identification code may be a pre-existing bar code used for article management. The service provider classifies or coordinates the above variable information according to categories and provides the so classified or combined information to the advertiser. A fee for 5 providing the information may be collected from the advertiser. This information may also be provided to entrepreneurs other than the advertiser.

[0025]

Referring to Fig.3, the service provider attaches the 10 identification numbers or codes, such as bar code, at the outset to the goods for which the advertiser requested the advertisement, so that the service provider server 4 is able to handle the relevant information easily. The information of other goods combined with these goods as well as the combination information representing the 15 condition and/or conditions of the combination of goods, is stored from the outset in storage means in the service provider server 4.

The aforementioned information of goods and/or the combination information may be provided from the advertiser server 3 over the network 2 to the service provider server 4 to be stored in 20 storage means in the service provider server 4.

The service provider server 4 acquires an example of combination of goods, suited to a user, using the aforementioned combination information, along with information of the goods owned by the user, i.e. user-owned-goods-data, via the coordinating means, 25 to provide information of the coordination to the user by the

combination information transmitting means. This assures a positive advertisement event for the users.

[0026]

The present invention is hereinafter explained in detail with 5 reference to certain preferred embodiments thereof.

Referring to Fig. 1, showing a first embodiment of the present invention, there is shown an article information providing system including a plurality of user terminals 1, as a portable terminal means, such as a mobile phone, a PHS, PDA or the like, each user terminal 1 10 having a position information acquisition means. The system also has a communication network 2, such as the Internet, a plurality of advertiser terminals 3 as terminals used by the advertiser requesting the advertisement, and a service provider server 4 as an article information providing server employed by a service provider who 15 renders article information providing services.

[0027]

The service provider server 4 includes a coordinating means having storage means for storing the article information as information representing the goods, along with the conditions of the 20 combination of the goods, and a combination information transmitting means for transmitting an example of the combination of the goods combined by the coordinating means, over the network. The coordinating means uses the user's profile and information of the goods owned by the user, both received over the network, to produce 25 an example of the combination of the goods received over the

network, and the goods stored in the storage means, based on the aforementioned conditions of the combination of the goods. The service provider server 4 also includes an information requesting means enabling the user terminal 1 to request the information of the 5 goods owned by the user and the position information at the user terminal 1.

[0028]

10 The aforementioned coordinating means includes storage means for storage of information of the goods and the conditions of combination (coordination information) and, using the user's profile and information of the goods received over the network 2, the coordinating means acquires an example of a combination of the goods received over the network 2 and the goods stored in the storage means based on the aforementioned conditions of combination.

15 As discussed above, the goods owned by the user may specifically include goods or articles currently being used by a user, that is, goods currently being worn (e.g., clothing) or being carried (e.g., devices such as headphones, mobile phones, etc.) by a user (in-hand user goods).

20 [0029]

25 The aforementioned coordination means further receives the position information of the user over the network 2 to execute coordination using the user's profile, information of the goods and the position information. The combination information transmitting means also is responsive to a request received over the network 2 to

transmit the example of the combination, provided by the coordination means, over the network 2, by way of advertisement. The aforementioned coordination means further includes a market analysis means for acquiring the user's profile and the information of 5 the goods owned by the user, to execute market analysis of the articles, and for transmitting the result of the market analysis over the network 2 to the advertiser terminal 3 used by the advertiser.

[0030]

The user terminal 1 is a terminal having a function of 10 acquiring its own position information. The user terminal is now explained with reference to a mobile phone having, as a means for acquiring the current position information, a GPS (global positioning system) or a position information acquisition means by a mobile network, and a PHS terminal, capable of grasping the position 15 information, as examples.

The user terminal 1 accesses the service provider server 4 over the network 2 to upload the user registration or the registration of the goods the user wears or carries or to download the advertisement data including information of combination of the goods. 20 There is no particular limitation to the uploading or downloading means, such that any suitable means, such as E-mail or WEB access by TCP/IP, may be used. It is noted that the network 2 referred to in the relevant explanation includes the Internet and a mobile network accommodating, for example, mobile phones.

25 [0031]

The advertiser uses the advertiser terminal 3 and requests that the service provider server 4 advertises goods over the network 2. Among the uploaded data, there is such information as the article code, photos, specifications or prices of the goods, or the sales 5 channel. There may also be examples of apparel coordination, as later explained.

[0032]

The service provider server 4 stores the user information, user's profile, the information of the goods carried by a user, the 10 advertiser's profile, advertiser terminal information, or information of the goods, as uploaded, in its storage means, and maintains this stored information. The service provider server 4 manipulates this information to perform analysis of marketability of goods by the geographical distribution of goods, combined with the user position 15 information and information of the goods carried by the user, user distribution by age or sex, taken alone or in combination, as well as to perform management of examples of combinations of the goods. The coordination information may be provided by the advertiser or by the service provider. Moreover, the coordination information may use 20 the results of analyses conducted by a third party, such as a market research firm, magazine publisher or an expert journal publisher, taken alone or in combination, as obtained by the service provider by outsourcing to these organizations.

The service provider server 4 is responsive to a request from 25 the advertiser or other entrepreneurs to download information of the

goods carried by the user, or the information on the results of analysis of marketability of the goods.

The service provider server 4 also has the functions of compensation processing for the user, by cash or points, for user 5 registration, uploading of the registration of the goods carried by the user, and billing processing for downloading of advertising data, including the combination information or coordination information or the like, including that the user may not be billed. The service provider server 4 also has the functions of billing processing for 10 requests from the advertiser terminal 3 for advertisements, and of billing processing in downloading information of the goods carried and the information on the results of analyses of marketability of the goods, responsive to requests from the advertiser terminal 3 and other entrepreneurs. There is no limitation to the means for settlement, 15 which may for example be electronic money, settlement by credit cards or transactions by the electronic accounts which allow charging via on-line.

[0033]

The operation of the embodiments of the present invention is 20 now explained in detail. In the following explanation, it is assumed that a user terminal network 2 is the Internet that includes a mobile phone and a PHS network (referred to below as mobile network), and that the user terminal 1 is a mobile phone terminal or a PHS terminal that is able to acquire its position information, from time to time, by 25 the GPS function and the mobile network.

[0034]

Referring to Figs. 1 to 5, the sequence of operations for registering the user terminal information in a service provider terminal 4 is now explained. The user accesses the service provider terminal 4, over the network 2, using the user terminal 1, to register the user terminal information, such as the user's profile (the information pertinent to the user, such as identification number peculiar to the user, age, sex or interests of the user) (step A1 of Fig. 4). The service provider terminal 4 registers the user terminal information in its storage means (e.g. a database) (step A2). The user terminal information contains the user's profile, such as the user's name (including a pseudonym and number for user identification), age, sex, profession and interests, first of all, and other information, such as the user's E-mail address, current position, the goods he/she owns, etc. These are merely illustrative, such that all of these are not needed.

[0035]

Referring to Fig. 5, the processing for uploading the information of the goods worn or carried by the user or the user's current position is explained.

The user inputs information of the goods he/she owns (for example, a jacket 26, trousers, cassette player 28, a bag 29 or a wrist watch 30), using portable terminals 21 to 24, as a user's terminal 1, as shown in Fig. 2, by inputting information of the goods by a keyboard, as goods information inputting means or by taking in the

identification number or code attached to the goods from the outset, with a camera or a bar code reader 25, as goods information readout means, enclosed in the terminal (step B1 of Fig. 5). After obtaining the position information of the user terminal 1 (step B2), the user 5 accesses the service provider server 4 over the network 2 to transmit the information of the goods he/she carries as well as information on his current position (step B3). The service provider server 4 registers the received information of the goods and the position information in the storage means (step B4). The step B2 represents the position 10 information acquisition means. Fig.6 shows the above-described processing operations.

[0036]

The service provider server 4 analyzes the registered user terminal information and information of the goods carried by the user, 15 according to the sex and the age, and stores the results of analyses in a storage means of the service provider server 4 to manage the so memorized results of analyses (step B5). After the analyses, the service provider server 4 executes compensation processing for the user who has provided the information (step B6). Examples of the 20 compensation processing may include supplying premiums or cash in accordance with rewards, consideration or a point system. This processing includes transmitting the results of point addition or the results of cash payment to the user terminal 1.

The steps B2 to B6 are repeated from time to time or 25 periodically, so that the position of the user terminal 1 and

information of the goods worn or carried by the user are grasped at all times by the service provider server 4.

[0037]

Referring to Fig. 7, the sequence of operations for the 5 advertiser terminal 3 to register the advertiser terminal information with the service provider server 4 is now explained. As when registering via the user terminal 1, the advertiser accesses the service provider server 4, over the network 2, using the advertiser terminal 3, to transmit the advertiser terminal information (step C1). The service 10 provider server 4 registers the advertiser terminal information in its own storage means (step C2). The advertiser terminal information contains the information for identifying the advertiser (e.g. name, code or symbol).

[0038]

15 Referring to Fig. 8, the sequence of operations when the advertiser registers the advertisement information with the service provider server 4 over the network 2, with the use of the advertiser terminal 3, is explained. The advertiser terminal 3 accesses the service provider server 4 over the network 2 to upload the 20 advertisement information (step D1). The service provider server 4 registers the advertisement information in its storage means (step D2) and, based on the coordination information (types of goods and combination conditions), classifies and manages the advertisement information (step D3). The coordination information may be 25 formulated by the advertiser and/or by the service provider, and/or

may use the results analyzed by a third party.

[0039]

Referring to Fig. 9, the processing for a user to request examples of combination of the goods is now explained. The user 5 accesses the service provider server 4, using the user terminal 1 (step E1). In this case, the user may directly designate the data he/she wants to acquire or may request advertisement by combination examples. When the user directly specifies the desired data, he/she can perform retrieval by criteria such as 'accessories' preferably 10 worn by a 'male' of a 'teenager' in the neighborhood of a 'cinema theater' of 'Shibuya'.

[0040]

On receipt of a request for a combination example for specified goods from a user, the service provider server 4 acquires a 15 combination example for the specified goods, based on the conditions of the combinations stored in the storage means, using the user's profile and information of the goods, both stored in the storage means, to download the combination example to the user terminal 1 (step E2). In this case, the information of the goods registered by the 20 advertiser is used and the names, prices and the sales channel(s) of the goods are indicated simultaneously. It is noted that the step E2 represents the coordinating means for providing the examples of combinations of the goods for the user. The step E2 also represents a combination information transmitting means for transmitting the 25 examples of combination to the user terminal 1. Fig. 10 illustrates

the processing described in Fig. 9.

The service provider server 4 may provide the examples of combination for a fee or may compensate with points or cash for browsing the advertisements. In this case, the service provider 5 server may perform the compensation process for the user or may bill the user (step E3).

[0041]

Referring to Fig. 11, the processing until the advertiser acquires information of the goods carried by the user, as analyzed by 10 the service provider server 4, is now explained.

Using the advertiser terminal 3, the advertiser accesses the service provider server 4 over the network 2, and requests downloading of the results of market analyses (step F1). Meanwhile, in accessing the service provider server 4 from the advertiser 15 terminal 3, the information specifying the type of information of market analyses, downloaded from the service provider server 4, is transmitted to the service provider server 4.

[0042]

The service provider server 4 executes a market search for the 20 articles and/or goods carried by the user, or analyzes the market, responsive to the request from the advertiser terminal 3, downloads the results to the advertiser terminal 3 (step F2) and performs processing of billing the advertiser terminal 3 (step F3). It is noted that the step F2 represents market analysis means and combination 25 information transmitting means. The state of the step F2 is shown in

Fig. 12, in which there is shown an example of providing the geographical distribution of a wristwatch 30 and trousers 27 to the advertiser terminal 3.

[0043]

5 It is known in the art that advertisements for goods could be made by an information medium, such as a magazine. However, the advertisement information in the information medium may be provided every week at most, while providing information in real time is difficult. Moreover, showing a combination example including
10 or incorporating the goods owned by the user is difficult. According to the present first embodiment, it becomes possible for an advertiser to make effective real-time advertisements of goods and/or products, by combining the goods carried by the user with other goods, based on the information of combination examples of the goods.

15 [0044]

Moreover, it becomes possible for the service provider server 4 to undertake real-time analysis of the geographical distribution of the articles and/or goods, user layer (sex, age etc.) or the purchaser layer, while it becomes possible for the advertiser to exploit the
20 information on the real-time articles and/or goods analyses for creating new and/or improved articles and/or goods.

Moreover, the user is able to select the purchase of goods, as he/she selects the goods he/she desires to purchase, from the examples of combinations of the goods with the goods he/she owns,
25 based on the information of combinations of the goods, supplied from

the server 4, so that it is possible for the user of the present services to purchase the goods effectively.

[0045]

Additionally, it is possible for the service provider server 4 to obtain the position information (the geographical distribution of the goods) and the information of the goods carried by the user, over the network 2, in real-time, and to analyze the information instantaneously. This improves up-to-date characteristics of the results of market research and analyses, so that this information becomes more attractive information with a high added value for the advertiser and other entrepreneurs that are in need of this information. As a result, it becomes possible to research the market and analyze the articles and/or goods in real-time, thus raising the added value of the information.

15 [0046]

Referring to Fig. 13, the second embodiment of the present invention is explained in detail. In the second embodiment, a program is installed on the user terminal 1 and only the difference of the position information and information of the goods carried by the user is uploaded to the service provider server 4. In the above-described first embodiment, the position information and information of the goods carried by the user are uploaded in their entirety. In this second embodiment, this information is uploaded only when a difference is produced in the user terminal 1. With this 25 second embodiment, it is possible to eliminate unneeded uploading to

diminish the communication expenses incurred to the user. Such reduction in the communication expenses is enabled even when the service provider sustains the communication expenses.

[0047]

5 The operation of this second embodiment is hereinafter explained. The block diagram in this second embodiment is the same as that shown in Fig. 1.

Referring to Fig. 13, only the difference from the above-described first embodiment is explained. This second 10 embodiment differs from the first embodiment as to steps B1 to B6 indicated in Fig. 5. A step G3 is an added step. The user terminal 1 stores information of the goods and the position information, obtained on accessing the server 4 last time and updated, in its storage means.

15 When the position information or information of the goods carried by the user, which has been newly registered in the user terminal 1, is the same as that uploaded on accessing the service provider server 4 last time, that is, when the newly registered information is of the same contents as the information stored in the 20 storage means, the service provider server 4 is not accessed (step G3, no).

When the position information or information of the goods carried by the user, which has been newly registered in the user terminal 1, is different from that uploaded on accessing the service 25 provider server 4, the user terminal 1 accesses the service provider

server 4 to upload information of the goods carried by the user and the position information (step G3, yes, step G4). The other processing is similar to that stated in the above-described first embodiment.

5 [0048]

Referring to Fig. 14, a third embodiment of the present invention is explained in detail. It is noted that the block diagram of the third embodiment is the same as that of Fig. 1.

In this third embodiment, information of the goods carried by 10 the user, and the position information, are acquired from the user on request from the service provider server 4. This third embodiment differs from the above-described first embodiment as to the steps B1 to B6 of Fig. 5.

A step H1 is added, in which the service provider server 4 15 requests information of the goods carried by the user and the position information from the user terminal 1. The step H1 constitutes the information requesting means. The other processing performed in this third embodiment is the same as that in the above-described first embodiment. This third embodiment allows for not only data 20 collection on accessing by the user but also real-time data collection by a request from the service provider.

[0049]

Referring to Fig. 15, a fourth embodiment of the present invention is explained in detail. It is noted that the block diagram of 25 the fourth embodiment is the same as that of Fig. 1.

In this fourth embodiment, a non-contact integrated circuit (IC) chip 151, as a goods information carrier, having stored therein the goods information, is mounted on goods, in place of a bar code or an identification code. Also, there is enclosed in the user terminal 1 a 5 reader/writer, as goods information readout/write means, by which the goods information stored in the IC chip 151 may be read out in a contact-free manner, or by which the goods information can be written on the IC chip 151 in a contact-free manner. By reading the goods information, stored in the IC chip 151 by the reader/writer, the 10 labor of inputting information of the goods carried by the user may be saved appreciably. The other processing is similar to that stated in the above-described first embodiment.

[0050]

15 The meritorious effects of the present invention are summarized as follows.

According to the present invention, the variable combination of goods may be provided in real-time in the article information providing system and in the article information-providing server.

20 Since a portable terminal capable of acquiring the position information is used as a user terminal acting as an information supplying source, a large variety of the information, as well as the position information, can be acquired in real-time, thus allowing for market analyses in real-time.

25 Moreover, the orientation of the advertisement can be instantaneously changed depending on the changes in information of

the goods combinations or on the results of the real-time analyses.

It should be noted that other objects, features and aspects of the present invention will become apparent in the entire disclosure and that modifications may be done without departing from the gist 5 and scope of the present invention as disclosed herein and claimed as appended herewith.

Also it should be noted that any combination of the disclosed and/or claimed elements, matters and/or items may fall under the modifications aforementioned.